

How God's Word is Spread, Part 2 - Acts 19:9 - March 1st, 2009

- The text before us in Acts 19:8-20 is so vital for us today because of what we face in the rapidly changing world in which we live;
- It is my own personal conviction that now, like never before, we need to "get the Word out," as it were, because the time is at hand.
- Perhaps one of the reasons we have accounts like this in Acts, is to provide us with a template of sorts, by which to spread God's Word.

- This is part two of a series titled: "How God's Word is Spread." In this study, we will see several interesting ways that this happens.

1. By patient boldness (Verse 8a)

v8a Paul goes into the synagogue, and for a period of three months speaks boldly as he preaches to the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus.
- What's interesting about this is that this is the longest period of time that Paul preached in a Synagogue. He was bold, yet still patient.

2. By persistent persuasion (Verse 8b)

v8b We're told that while Paul is there in the synagogue for those three months, he "argues persuasively about the kingdom of God."
- It's important to understand that Paul isn't being argumentative, rather; the word "arguing" means he spoke using "winning words."

3. By obstinate opposition (Verse 9a)

9a But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.

v9a The Apostle Paul is met with obstinance from those who refused to believe and, we're told that they maligned the Way, publicly.
- This is an interesting detail that at first may not be necessary to include in the text; that is unless it's germane to our understanding.
- I suggest that this detail is given to us so we'll understand that opposition may actually further God's Kingdom in spreading God's Word.

- The fact of the matter is, a bird cannot spread its wings and fly unless it has the opposition of the wind to lift it in the air so it can travel.
- So too is this true with respect to the Word of God. It may not be spread unless it has opposition, even persecution, so it too can travel.
- Calm seas don't produce skilled sailors. We do err when we misunderstand opposition. The Lord may allow it to accomplish His will.
- Paul was keenly aware of this, and actually saw opposition like this, which was not foreign to him, as open doors of opportunity.

1 Corinthians 16:7-9 7 I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 **because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.** NIV

- Not only did Paul see opposition as open doors of opportunity, he knew that God would further the Gospel in spite of strong opposition.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-3 1 You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. 2 We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but **with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.** NIV

4. By the Holy Spirit's power (Verse 9b)

9b So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him...

v9b After this obstinate opposition, Paul leaves, but not before taking with him those disciples that had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- Again, the detail is remarkable and notable. We're told that Paul takes the very disciples who were Spirit filled, just three months earlier.
- I didn't know that they were there with Paul. Luke didn't tell us that in the previous verse, but he tells us now, why? We need to know it.

- We need to know it because, if Paul and, these disciples with him, didn't have the Holy Spirit, God's Word wouldn't have spread.
- It's absolutely imperative that we understand this one dynamic as it relates to the text we have before us; the Holy Spirit is "the" source.
- One of the most powerful pictures in the scriptures illustrating this truth is found in a vision the prophet Zechariah had from the Lord.

Zechariah 4:1-6 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3 Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." 6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. NKJV

5. By daily commitment (Verse 9c)

9c...and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

v9c After Paul and these Ephesian disciples left the synagogue, they go instead to the school of Tyrannus, and had daily discussions.
- What makes this detail so interesting is not only that they did this everyday, it's that they probably had to do this at a certain time of day.
- Keep in mind that Paul still has a job working as a tent maker, and presumably, these disciples are still employed with day jobs as well.

- It's believed that it was during their "off hours," when most of the people were resting from their work that they met at this lecture hall.
- They didn't have AC back in that day, thus they really couldn't and wouldn't work during the "heat of the day" from 11:00am-4:00pm.
- The workday was from the hours of 7:00am-11:00am, then again from 4:00pm to 9:00pm, with that 11:00am-4:00pm break in between.

- Why do we need to know their work hours? What's the point anyway? Well, I'm so glad you asked; here's why:
- In order for them to do this every day during the heat of the day, instead of having the time off, would have required a daily commitment.

"Taking advantage of this schedule Paul held classes during the afternoon, when the building used by Tyrannus, the philosopher, was vacant. I'm so impressed with the servant's heart and mentality of Paul. Not only did he support himself in ministry by making tents, he used his time off to teach about the things of the kingdom."
Jon Courson